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Pentagon on the Grill . . . By George C. Wilson

McNamara, Services Challenged

This has been a long, hot summer for the Pentagon—and it is going to get worse.

The Pentagon leadership, from Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara on down, is being broiled for everything from storekeeping to strategy.

Take this past week, for example.

The Joint

Economic

Committee

on Monday

called Mc-

Namara a

lousy store-

keeper; the

Senate Pre-

paredness Subcommittee

on Wednesday

decried the pilot

shortage, and the

Joint Atomic Energy

Committee

on Thursday

challenged the

Pentagon's Chinese nuclear

threat.

The week before was not

any better. The Senate Foreign

Relations Committee

approved a bill that would

put the Pentagon out of the

business of selling arms to

underdeveloped nations.

WHILE McNAMARA—as

the man in charge and the

lone holdout on going ahead

with an anti-ballistic-missile

(ABM) system—has taken

the most heat, the services

have not fared very well

lately on their own.

The Army has been told

by a House Armed Services subcommittee that it does not know how to run an aircraft program, the light observation helicopter being the case in point. An even bigger flap on Army management is in the works, and may surface soon.

The Navy, after what must go down as one of the worst lobbying campaigns, had its Fast Deployment Logistics (FDL) ship shot out from under it by Congress. And the Forrestal and Liberty disasters indicate even worse luck at sea.

The Air Force cannot get itself off the ground with either new bombers or spacecraft. The bomber it wants—called the Advanced Manned Strategic Aircraft, or AMSA—has been pushed aside by McNamara's plane, the TFX, and its Manned Orbiting Laboratory is suffering from malnutrition as dollars go elsewhere.

The Johnson Administration budget knife is even hovering over such approved Air Force programs as the Minuteman 2 missile. The word has gone out that there will be a stretch-out, saving money by slowing down the replacement of Minuteman 1 with Minuteman 2 missiles.

AND THEN there is the TFX—the swing-wing fighter bomber McNamara ordered the Air Force to build

with the Navy. Both the Air Force and Navy versions have crashed on test flights.

This summer's problems with the TFX were severe enough to cause McNamara—the man in the front office—to replace the manager out in the field, Air Force Maj. Gen. John L. Zoeckler.

As if these problems inside and outside the Pentagon were not enough, there is the most unmanageable problem of all—the Vietnam War.

Civilians grumble the generals did not deliver there. The generals grumble the civilian bosses made them fight the war their way. The war grinds on.

What all this suggests is that, despite a manager such as McNamara, the dynamics still make military problems largely unmanageable.



Wilson

Armed Svc →